STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Bomb Explosions in Five Prestigious Passenger Trains on the 5th and 6th December, 1993

THE MINISTER OF RAILWAYS (SHRI C.K. JAFFER SHARIF) : Sir, it is with deep anguish that I apprise the House of the unfortunate occurrences to 5 prestigious passenger train at various locations on three Zonal Railways in the late hours of last night and early this morning. Blasts of explosive devices occurred on 2306 Dn Rajdhani Express running from New Delhi to Howrah, 2301 Up Rajdhani Express ex-Howrah to New Delhi, 2951 Dn Rajdhani Express ex-Bombay Central to New Delhi, 9022 Up Flying Rani Express ex-Surat to Bombay, and 2723 Dn Andhra Pradesh Express ex-Secunderabad to New Delhi. While the explosion in 2306 Dn Rajdhani Express occurred around 23.00 hrs. on 5-12-1993 between Kanpur and Allahabad stations of Northern Railway causing injuries to 2 Bearers, all the other four explosions have taken place this morning between 05.00 hrs. and 07.10 hrs. In all, 1 passenger has been killed and 18 others have sustained injuries.

The explosion on 2723 Dn A. P. Express ex-Secunderabad to New Delhi took place in one of the Second Class coaches while entering Maula Ali station on Secunderabad-Kazipet section of South Central Railway at 07.10 hrs., leading to death of 1 passenger and injuries to 11 others. The injured have been admitted in the Railway Hospital at Secunderabad. On Western Railway, 2951 Dn Rajdhani Express suffered an explosion between Indergarh and Amli stations on Kota-Gangapur City section. The explosion took place in a Chair car, resulting in injuries to 4 passengers. In another incident on Western Railway on Surat-Bombay section, the explosion took place on 9022 Flying Rani Express while the train was entering Bhestan station in a double decker Second Class coach, resulting in injury to 1 passenger who has been admitted in the Civil Hospital at Surat. In the fifth incident of the series, 2301 up Rajdhani Express running from Howrah to New Delhi also had an explosion this morning in one of the Chair Cars between Panki and Bhaupur stations on Kanpur-Tundla section. Fortunately, in this incident, one more device was recovered from another coach which exploded subsequently at Bhaupur station.

In all these occurrences, senior Railway and Civil officers reached the respective sites and necessary medical and allied arrangements were made. The cases are being registered with the police. Fortunately, none of the explosions led to fire on running trains. Ex-gratia payments to the affected passengers are being made.

The planting of these devices on selected prestigious trains seems to indicate a design to create scare among public. Security arrangements have been strengthened in coordination with the respective State police authorities. The directives have been given to the Railways to intensify checks and inspections of empty coaching rakes coming from maintenance lines as also on the persons leading to any suspicion. Instructions have also been given to depioy dog squads wherever necessary. Special checking arrangements are being made at the platforms, coaches and other strategic locations. The Ministry of Home Affairs have been requested to conduct detailed investigations into the blasts.

My colleague, Shri K. C. Lenka, all Railway workers and I extend our heartfelt condolences to the relatives of the deceased and sincere sympathies to the injured in these unfortunate incidents.

SHRI VISHVJIT P. SINGH (Maharashtra) : Mr. Vice-Chairman, Sir, in the statement which the hon. Railway Minister has made, he has given all the facts which are at his disposal. But this is basically a matter concerning the Home Ministry. This is a security matter. It is obvious that it is not within the purview of the Railway Ministry to give details about these blasts. The details can be given to us only by the Home Minister. I would request you, Mr. Vice-Chairman, to ask the Home Minister to make another statement regarding these

bomb blasts after ascertaining all the facts. The statement of the Railway Minister merely deals with the facts of the blasts. We want to know which the forces behind these blasts were, what the implications were, etc. I would request you to ask the Home Minister to make a detailed statement.

THE VICE-CHAIRMAN (SHRI MD. SALIM) : It will be communicated to the Home Ministry.

श्री संघ प्रिय गौतम : (उत्तर प्रदेश) : महोदय, मेरा व्यवस्था का प्रश्न हैं और वह यह है कि जो पेपर सरकूलेट किया गया हैं उसमें कहा गया है कि मंत्री जी का स्टेटमेंट होगा । उसमें लिखा हैं –

"Shri C. K. Jaffer Shrief to make a statement regarding bomb explosions on five passeger trains on 6th December, 1993".

पैसेंजर ट्रेन का मतलब जनरली होता है आर्डिनरी पैसेंजर ट्रेन . . . (व्यवधान) जबकि विस्फोट राजधानी एक्सप्रेस गाड़ियों में हुए हैं।

STATEMENT BY MINISTER

Notice given by the Staff Unions Representing Postal Employees to go on Strike with effect from the 7th December, 1993

THE MINISTER OF COMMUNICATIONS (SHRI SUKH RAM) : Sir, the staff unions representing postal employees of all grades and the extra-departmental agents have decided to go on strike from 7th December, 1993. The unions had given a Charter of Demands which has 27 items. Severval round of discussions at the level of Postal Services Board were held with the unions and I had also discussed the issues with them on the 2nd and 5th Dec 1993.

One of the main demands relates to grant of pay scale and other benefits like pension, leave and subsistence allowance for around three lakh extra-departmental agents. These extra-departmental agents serve mainly in the rural areas in their own villages and are engaged part-time on an average for 3 hours. They are not regular Government servants. They are paid an allowance based on their workload and are also entitled for dearness allowance, gratuity and covered by an insurance scheme. These agents can pursue their own profession, trade or avocation in addition to their postal duties. The Government during discussions have offered the appointment of an ED Committee with an independent Chairman to look into the various demands in addition to an immediate payment of Rs. 35 per month to each ED Agent as interim relief costing Government exchequer approximately Rs. 13 crores per annum.

The other demands of the unions relate to several benefits for different grades of employees including revision of pay scales of some cadres. There is a scheme of Joint Consultative Machinery in the Department of Posts for settlement of disputes and grievances which has been functioning very well. The Government, during discussions, as a goodwill measure, have offered to settle some of their demands immediately like payment of Rs. 100 per month as an allowance for those Postal Assistants who work on multi-purpose counter machines in the post offices, an increase in the Holiday Duty Allowance for Postmen and relief, to Group D officials who even on their promotion to a Group C scale would be enabled to retire at the age of 60 years. In the face of the above and the fact that the Govt. have already announced an interim relief to Central Govt. servants and the constitution of the V Cenral Pay Commission which will look into all demands for revision of pay scales, there is absolutely no justification whatsoever for the postal employees to go on strike causing considerable hardship and inconvenience to the people.

I have faith that the postal employees will see reason and will not go on strike, especially when I have assured that the